



## FRIENDS OF HOPE: VISITORS' DAY

April 11, 2015

### Sabbath School Program: Hope for Those Who Face Stress

Organize the Sabbath School class or group into smaller groups of four or five. If it is a small class, you may choose to organize in threes, but try to have at least three. Set aside five minutes for the small groups to address these questions:

- (1) What factors in your life do you consider to be sources of stress?
  - (2) How do you deal with that stress?
  - (3) Are you satisfied with your methods of stress management, or do you feel some improvement is needed?
  - (4) How does your faith in God affect your reaction to stress?
- As the period nears the end, have each small group appoint someone to convey the major points that emerged in the short discussion.

At the end of the five minutes, bring the whole class together again. It might be helpful to have a flipchart or chalkboard available to jot down the findings of each of the small groups.

After each small group has reported its findings, discuss the information gathered:

- (1) What are some common sources of stress?
- (2) What are common ways of dealing with it?
- (3) How can we learn to rely more on God when addressing stress?

Ask the class to cite examples from the Bible of people who encountered stressful situations. What can be learned from their reactions? Some possible examples might be the following, if the group needs prompting:

- Joseph (Gen. 37, 39)
- Elijah (1 Kings 19:9)
- Jesus (Luke 5:15, 16)
- Paul (2 Cor. 12:7)

These are mostly positive examples, but allow negative ones too. We are capable of learning from the mistakes of others, including biblical figures. For example, Elijah seemed to be on the verge of what we would today call a meltdown. This is also an opportunity to note that some of the ways God gives us to recover from stress and adversity may be quite mundane. Prayer and study of the scriptures is central to the Christian's approach to life, but before Elijah received his vision, God first provided him with food and rest.

Have the class look up and read aloud the following Bible verses that contain promises for people under stress. Emphasize that the Christian can claim these promises at any time, and consider them as already fulfilled:

- Psalm 56:3, 4—"When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?"<sup>1</sup>
- Isaiah 40:31—"Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."
- Romans 8:28—"We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love

him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

●Philippians 4:6, 7—”Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Conclude by sharing the following passage from *Patriarchs and Prophets*:  
“Faith in God’s love and overruling providence lightens the burdens of anxiety and care. It fills the heart with joy and contentment in the highest or the lowliest lot. Religion tends directly to promote health, to lengthen life, and to heighten our enjoyment of all its blessings.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Musical Selections**

*Seventh Day Adventist Hymnal*

475—“Balm in Gilead

529—“Under His Wings

631—“When on Life a Darkness Falls”

528—“A Shelter in a Time of Storm”

**Consider:** How do our reactions to the inevitable stress or adversity of life demonstrate the reality of the hope and faith we have in our great and good God? This hope is our emphasis for this special Sabbath day.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless noted otherwise, all scripture references in the program are from the *New International Version of the Bible*.

<sup>2</sup> *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 600.